

on the night of 29-30 April. McClelland's corps marched across the neck of land opposite Grand Gulf and bivouacked downstream from the Confederate stronghold. Union reconnaissance parties crossed to the eastern bank of the river seeking information on landing sites and roads running inland. One of these returned with a slave, who informed Grant of a plantation landing known as Bruinsburg, roughly halfway between Grand Gulf and Rodney. Grant quickly decided to land at Bruinsburg rather than farther downstream at Rodney.

Early on the morning of 30 April, McClelland's corps boarded Porter's ironclads and transports and steamed downstream to Bruinsburg. Union landings began without opposition. However, the bluff line that represented high, dry ground was about a mile inland from the Bruinsburg landings. If the Confederates should establish defensive positions at the bluffs before Grant pushed inland, it could be Chickasaw Bayou all over again. Heightening the tension was the fact that McClelland had neglected to issue rations to his troops before they had embarked that morning, so there was a four-hour delay while the disembarking troops drew supplies.

McClelland had all 17,000 troops ashore by 1600, when the advance inland finally began. No Confederate opposition materialized as McClelland's troops climbed the bluffs near Windsor and moved out on the southernmost of the two roads leading to Port Gibson. Brigadier General Eugene A. Carr's division led the way, followed by those of Brigadier General Peter J. Osterhaus, Brigadier General Alvin P. Hovey, and A.J. Smith. Meanwhile, the boats that had landed McClelland in the morning were already crossing the lead elements of McPherson's corps. McPherson would have 4,500 men on the road to Port Gibson by nightfall.

Thus, the Battle of Bruinsburg, potentially the most important engagement of the Vicksburg campaign, never took place. The Confederates had badly misjudged Union intentions. Pemberton, distracted by Union operations in the Delta (north of Vicksburg) and by Grierson's raid into eastern Mississippi, had not fully discerned Grant's intentions. Conflicting advice from his subordinates compounded Pemberton's indecision. Major General Carter L. Stevenson, in Vicksburg, argued against any detachments from his command at the same time that Bowen, in Grand Gulf, had warned that the Union main effort was heading his way. Not until the Union bombardment of Grand Gulf on 29 April had Pemberton realized that Bowen was right. Belatedly, he had ordered Stevenson to send two

brigades to Bowen, but these were still on the road when Grant came ashore at Bruinsburg on the 30th. (Brigadier General Edward D. Tracy's brigade marched from Warrenton, and Brigadier General William E. Baldwin's brigade marched from camps north of Vicksburg late on 29 April.) Pemberton further ordered a concentration at Jackson of those troops that had been chasing Grierson's raiders. Significantly, when Pemberton learned that Grant was ashore in force, he moved his headquarters from Jackson to Vicksburg—he did not come to Port Gibson to direct operations in person.

*Vignette 1 (Two days before the bombardment of Grand Gulf, Bowen recognized the danger of a Union landing downstream from his post):* "I have the honor to report that all the movements of the enemy during the last twenty-four hours seem to indicate an intention on their part to march their army still lower down in Louisiana, perhaps to Saint Joseph, and then to run their steamers by me and cross to Rodney. In view of this, and from the fact that Port Gibson is almost essential to this position [Grand Gulf], I have examined myself and now have the engineers on a reconnaissance selecting a line of battle south of Port Gibson." (Bowen to assistant adjutant general, 27 April 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 792-93.)

*Vignette 2 (On 30 April, Bowen's concern proves justified):* "Six gunboats, with two transports lashed to them, passed my batteries [last night] between 9 and 10 o'clock. Enemy on Louisiana shore, below. Hurry up reinforcements." (Bowen to Pemberton, 30 April 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 1, 657.)

*(Later that day):* "Three thousand Federals were at Bethel Church, 10 miles from Port Gibson, at 3 P.M., advancing. They are still landing at Bruinsburg." (Bowen to Pemberton, 30 April 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 1, 658.)

*Vignette 3 (Grant's reaction to the landings):* ". . . I felt a degree of relief scarcely ever equalled since. Vicksburg was not yet taken it is true, nor were its defenders demoralized by any of our previous moves. I was now in the enemy's country, with a vast river and the stronghold of Vicksburg between me and my base of supplies. But I was on dry ground on the same side of the river with the enemy. All the campaigns, labors, hardships and exposures from the month of December previous to this time that had been made and endured, were

for the accomplishment of this one object.” (U.S. Grant, *Personal Memoirs*, vol. 1 [New York: Charles L. Webster, 1885], 480-81.)

*Teaching Points:* Operational decision making, seizing the initiative.

### Stand 10

#### A. K. Shaifer House (Battle of Port Gibson)

*Directions:* (This route involves travel on some narrow, rough, unpaved roads. It should not be attempted by bus. If you are not confident that your vehicle is capable of negotiating this route, backtrack 6.1 miles to Lookout Point and conduct stand 10 there. Afterwards, proceed to Port Gibson and on to stand 11.)

Turn left on Route 552. After traveling 1.3 miles, bear left at the “Y” intersection. Turn left after 1.2 miles, just beyond Bethel Presbyterian Church. Go 4.7 miles and turn left on a gravel road. The Shaifer House is about 3.2 miles up this road. Be alert for washouts, debris on the road, and overhanging branches (see map 11 on page 117).

*Orientation:* This route to the Shaifer House is the old Rodney Road, the southernmost of two routes leading from Bruinsburg to Port Gibson. Grant’s army took this road on 30 April. The northern route, once called the Bruinsburg road, is today Route 552. A few yards east of the Shaifer House is the old farm road that links the two routes. The Magnolia Church site is about one-half mile farther east along this road.

In 1863, the ridge tops in this area were cleared and cultivated. The ravines looked much as they do today. Thus, one could see from one ridgecrest to another. Moving troops through the steep, vine-choked ravines, however, was a difficult proposition.

*Situation 1: Rodney Road Battle.* Bowen’s reaction to the Union landing at Bruinsburg was to mount a delaying action that would give Pemberton time to assemble field forces for a meaningful counterstroke. The ground that Bowen selected for his battle was in the “loess hills” country between Bruinsburg and Port Gibson, Grant’s probable objective. With off-road movement almost impossible, the loess hills made it feasible for a small force to delay a much stronger opponent.

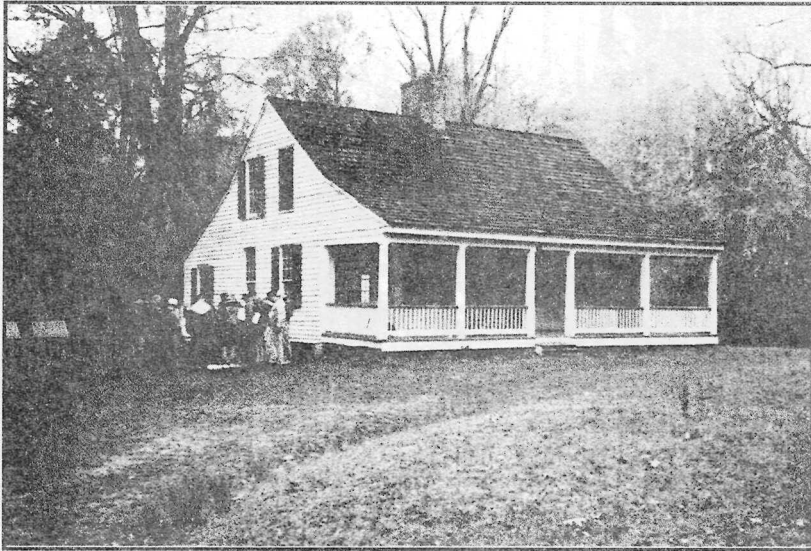
On the evening of 30 April, Bowen had two brigades in position. Brigadier General Martin E. Green’s brigade straddled the Rodney



The old Rodney Road, west of the Shaifer House (1997)

Road at Magnolia Church ridge, with pickets advanced to the A. K. Shaifer house. Farther north, Tracy's brigade, having completed a forty-mile, 27-hour march from Warrenton, took up positions along the Bruinsburg Road near Lookout Point. Baldwin's brigade, also detached from the Vicksburg defenses, camped north of Port Gibson. Colonel Francis M. Cockrell's Missouri brigade remained in reserve at Grand Gulf. Bowen's forces at this point totaled about 8,000. Marching toward him through the darkness were 26,000 Union troops: the four divisions of McClelland's corps and Major General John A. Logan's division of McPherson's corps.

Shortly after midnight on 1 May, McClelland's advance force encountered and exchanged volleys with Green's pickets near the Shaifer house. After ascertaining that the Confederates were present in force, McClelland chose to gather up his corps and await daylight before pressing the fight. When morning came, McClelland deployed two divisions (Carr and Hovey), with a third (A.J. Smith) in reserve. He initially intended to work around Green's left flank, but a Confederate attack against the center of his line changed his mind. McClelland proceeded to mass his forces along and on both sides of the Rodney Road. There was not much room on the ridge tops in which to deploy. Regiments stacked up two, three, and four deep on the ridges around the Shaifer House. At 1000, the blue juggernaut rolled forward



The Shafer House (1997).

and, after some bitter fighting, broke Green's brigade and drove it from the field in disarray. McClernand's troops occupied Magnolia Church ridge and halted.

On the Confederate side, Bowen recognized that Green's troops had done all the fighting that they could for the time being. He permitted Green to retreat all the way to the intersection of the Rodney and Bruinsburg roads, reconstituting his force on the march. To take Green's place on the Rodney Road, Bowen brought up Baldwin's brigade and two of Cockrell's regiments. Rather than deploying these troops on the open ground of the next ridge top where they would be vulnerable to Union firepower, Bowen set them in the low ground along Willow Creek—Baldwin astride the Rodney Road, with Cockrell covering his left flank.

Following a pause on Magnolia Church ridge, during which time McClernand and the governor of Illinois delivered patriotic speeches, McClernand's troops resumed their advance. When they crested the ridge overlooking Willow Creek, they met renewed Confederate resistance. Sensing trouble ahead, McClernand asked for and received reinforcements—one brigade of Logan's division (McPherson's corps). This gave McClernand four brigades on line, and three in reserve, on a 2,000-yard front. When this force failed to dislodge

Baldwin's Confederates from Willow Creek, McClelland opted for even greater density. He packed twenty-one regiments on a front of 800 yards against the Confederate center. Still Baldwin's brigade held its ground.

At this point in the battle, Cockrell's depleted brigade launched an audacious counterattack against the right flank of McClelland's massive force. Cockrell succeeded in driving off two Union regiments, but Hovey, whose division received the attack, had seen Cockrell coming and had already positioned artillery and infantry to protect the threatened flank. After hard fighting, Cockrell's men fell back. Not long thereafter, Baldwin also retreated in the face of overwhelming Union pressure.

*Vignette 1 (Stone's brigade of Carr's division, McClelland's corps, reports on the nighttime march along Rodney Road and the morning's fighting at Magnolia Church):* "The road over which we marched passed through a country much broken by gorges and ravines, and thickly covered with tall timber, underbrush, and cane, so peculiar to the Southern country. While moving forward in this order, and about three-quarters of a mile from Magnolia Church, our skirmishers were fired upon by a heavy picket force of the enemy, posted in an angle of the road . . . We then moved forward in column . . . and as our skirmishers reached the head of the lane in front of Magnolia Church they received a tremendous volley of musketry from the enemy, strongly posted on the right and left of the church. I . . . formed the advance companies into line, and sent an order back for the entire brigade to move forward into line . . .

"Soon after sunrise the battle was renewed by the enemy, who held their position during the night . . . About 10 o'clock it became evident that the enemy were massing their forces upon our immediate front, as their musketry was increasing in volume and rapidly advancing toward us. At this juncture I moved my brigade forward in double lines of battalions, for the purpose of charging upon the advancing columns of the enemy. We were compelled to cross a deep hollow, thickly covered on both slopes with underbrush and cane, but my men moved forward with the spirit and steadiness of veteran troops, and with unbroken lines. When the thicket was passed, and as we advanced into the open field close to the enemy's lines, we opened our fire upon them with such rapidity and precision that, unable to resist it, they soon broke and retreated in utter confusion. This ended the battle of the morning."

(Report of Col. William N. Stone, 2 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 1, 628-31.)

*Vignette 2 (Cockrell's account of his attack against the Union right flank during the afternoon battle along Willow Creek):* "The Third [Missouri] and Fifth [Missouri] Infantry were moved, by the order and under the personal direction of General Bowen, to the extreme right of the enemy, and forming in order of battle—the Fifth in front and the Third in its immediate rear—charged upon the enemy in large force (outnumbering these two regiments at least five to one), supported by a battery of six to eight guns. The enemy immediately began to change their lines so as to meet our troops, and the Third moving to the left to unmask the Fifth, these regiments dashed upon and engaged the enemy at very close range for some forty minutes and drove back in confusion the line first engaging us. As often as one line was driven back, another of fresh troops was thrown in our front. When it became manifest that a continuance of the engagement could result in no advantage to us, these two regiments fell back and took their original position on the extreme left, having inflicted on the enemy an heavy blow which deterred him from attempting to pursue." (Report of Col. Francis M. Cockrell, 22 June 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 1, 668-70.)

*Vignette 3 (Cockrell's attack, as perceived by Slack's brigade of Hovey's division, McClernand's corps):* "These lines had not more than been formed when three rebel regiments—two Missouri and one Louisiana—came down at a charge, with terrific yells, and could not be seen, because of the very thick growth of cane, until they reached a point within 30 yards of my line.

"The Fifty-sixth Ohio and Forty-seventh Indiana opened upon their line in front, and the Twenty-fourth Indiana on their flank, a most terrific and jarring fire, which arrested their charge and threw them into some confusion, but they soon recovered, and returned our fire with great spirit and pertinacity for about two hours, when the rebel survivors fled in utter confusion, leaving their dead and wounded upon the ground." (Report of Col. James R. Slack, 5 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 1, 610-12.)

*Teaching Points:* Use of terrain in defense, attack over difficult terrain.

*Situation 2: Bruinsburg Road Battle.* Meanwhile, a separate fight took place along the Bruinsburg road. During the predawn hours, Tracy formed his brigade parallel to and south of the road, with its right flank on Bayou Pierre and its front towards the Shaifer House, where musket

fire could be heard. Unknown to Tracy, there was a farm path that ran from the Shaifer house to his position along the Bruinsburg road. McClelland's fourth division (Osterhaus), later reinforced by one brigade from McPherson's corps, formed up near the Shaifer house and attacked northwards, guiding on this farm path. Tracy's skirmishers—and the terrain—quickly disordered the Union advance. Units lost their alignments and wandered off their axes of advance, creating gaps in the line and causing instances of friendly fire as Union formations crossed in front of each other. When Osterhaus' men finally reached Tracy's battle line south of the Bruinsburg Road, they attempted an assault, which fell apart in the bullet-swept jungle.

Bad as it was for the Union troops, things were little better for the Confederates, who stood on open ridge tops raked by fire coming from opponents concealed in the ravines below. Tracy was killed early in the action. His successor, Colonel Isham W. Garrott, knew little about the disposition of friendly forces and nothing about Tracy's concept of operation.

There came a pause in the action, during which Osterhaus sorted out his intermingled units. Then, the Union attack resumed. Osterhaus anchored his right and advanced his left, which crossed Bruinsburg Road and broke Garrott's hold on Bayou Pierre. With their right flank in danger of being turned, Garrott's men fell back, fighting stubbornly along the Bruinsburg Road. To reinforce Garrott, Bowen sent Green's brigade, which had reassembled after its defeat on Magnolia Church ridge. But Green tied in on the wrong flank—Garrott's left, not his hard-pressed right.

At about 1730, Bowen recognized that he had done all he could to delay Grant, short of sacrificing his little force altogether. He ordered all his troops to break contact and retreat. On the Union side, McClelland's soldiers were too fatigued and disoriented to pursue. Bowen made good his escape, having obstructed the Union campaign for a full day. What use did Pemberton make of this time? When he learned by telegraph of the fighting in progress, Pemberton realized for the first time the full significance of Union moves during the preceding month. He sent a telegram to Jefferson Davis asking for reinforcements from other departments. Within his own department, Pemberton ordered Major General William W. Loring to move his division from Jackson toward Port Gibson and to take command of all the Confederate troops confronting Grant. Pemberton himself remained in Vicksburg.



Grant's forces lost 131 killed, 719 wounded, and twenty-five missing in the Battle of Port Gibson. Bowen's casualties were numerically fewer—Confederate returns were incomplete—but as a proportion of his total force, his loss was much more severe.

*Vignette 1 (Bowen informs Pemberton of the battle by telegraph at 1320):* "We have been engaged in a furious battle ever since daylight; losses very heavy. General Tracy is killed . . . We are out of ammunition for cannon and small arms, the ordnance trains of the re-enforcements not being here. They outnumber us trebly. There are three divisions against us. My whole force is engaged, except three regiments on Big Black, Bayou Pierre, and Grand Gulf. The men act nobly, but the odds are overpowering." (Bowen to Pemberton, 1 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 1, 659.)

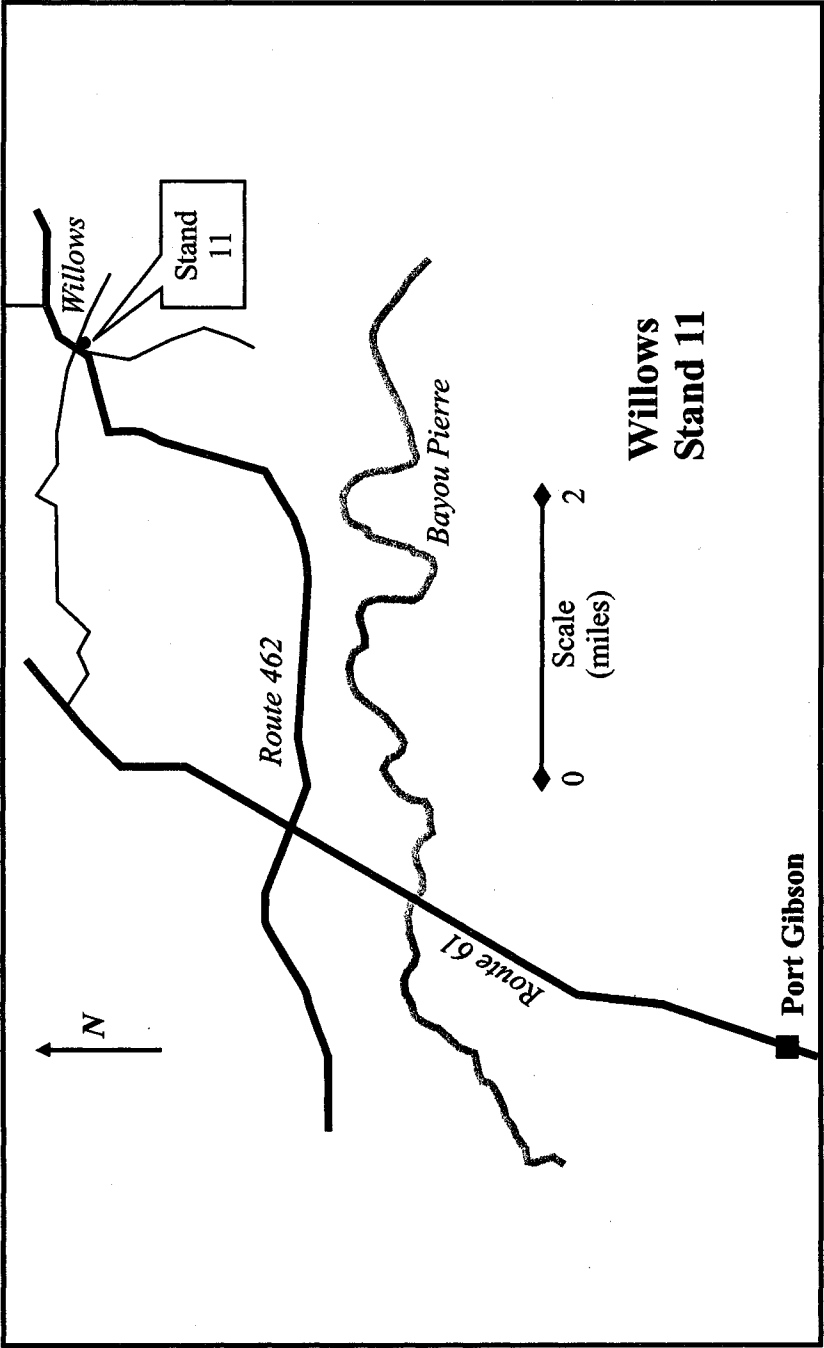
*Vignette 2 (Pemberton calls on President Davis for help):* "Enemy can cross all his army from Hard Times to Bruinsburg, below Bayou Pierre. Large reinforcements should be sent me from other departments. Enemy's movement threatens Jackson, and, if successful, cuts off Vicksburg and Port Hudson from the east. Am hurrying all re-enforcements I possibly can to Bowen. Enemy's success in passing our batteries has completely changed character of defense." (Pemberton to Davis, 1 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 807.)

*Teaching Points:* Use of terrain in defense, attack over difficult terrain, loss of commander, contrasting command styles.

## Stand 11 Willows (Willow Springs)

*Directions:* Continue east on the Shaifer House road and return to Port Gibson. In Port Gibson, bear right at the Y intersection, go two blocks, then turn left on Church Street (Route 61). Approximately 3.5 miles north of town, turn right on State Route 462. Go 4.5 miles to a five-way intersection (see map 12).

*Orientation:* The section of Route 462 leading to this stand was not a Civil War-era road. Facing north, the road to the right and rear was the road from Port Gibson, via Grindstone Ford. The road to the left ran to Ingleside and Grand Gulf. The road straight ahead connected with routes to Hankinson's Ferry and Rocky Springs.



Map 12

*Situation 1: Operational Pause.* On 2 May, elements of McPherson's corps pushed on into Port Gibson while McClellan's corps policed the battlefield. McPherson found that the retreating Confederates had destroyed the Little Bayou Pierre bridge just north of town. Tearing materials from nearby buildings, Union work parties constructed a 166-foot-long floating raft-bridge in just four hours. The next day, McPherson's troops repaired a bridge over Big Bayou Pierre at Grindstone Ford. McPherson promptly sent one division (Logan) west toward Ingleside and the other (Brigadier General Marcellus M. Crocker) north toward Hankinson's Ferry on the Big Black River. The crossroads at Willow Springs was a busy place on 3 May.

McPherson's advance toward the Big Black threatened to cut off Bowen and the 7,000 Confederates who had fallen back to Grand Gulf. On 3 May, Bowen evacuated Grand Gulf and barely escaped to the north bank of the Big Black. Grant rode into Grand Gulf that day, where he found that Porter's ironclads had already secured the landing. Grand Gulf became Grant's base of operations for the next two weeks.

From 3 to 9 May, Grant's army paused in the general vicinity of Willow Springs, while Sherman's corps made the long march from Milliken's Bend to join the main body. Grant used the time to bring up supplies and to weigh his options for continuing the campaign. Messages he received from downriver revealed that Major General Nathaniel P. Banks, commander of the Department of the Gulf, expected Grant to detach a portion of his force to aid Banks in the reduction of Port Hudson. Banks would then support Grant in an operation against Vicksburg. Grant dismissed this course of action because it would yield the initiative to Pemberton for a period of several weeks.

Alternatively, Grant could mount an immediate advance directly toward Vicksburg. To test this option, McPherson sent a small force to reconnoiter the route from Hankinson's Ferry toward Warrenton. Not only did the reconnaissance force encounter Confederate defenses at Redbone Church, but also an advance on this axis would compel Grant to struggle through "loess hills" terrain all the way to Vicksburg.

A third option, and the one that Grant selected on 7 May, was to advance inland, along the watershed of the Big Black and Big Bayou Pierre. This course of action would allow him to cut off Vicksburg from the rest of the Confederacy before turning west to deal with Pemberton's army. Accordingly, on 9 May, McPherson's corps moved

off to Utica, where it constituted the right flank of the advance. On 10 May McClernand's corps advanced with its left flank protected by the Big Black River. Sherman's corps, which had crossed from Hard Times to Grand Gulf on 6 and 7 May, assumed the center position in the Union advance on 11 May. The army's objective was the Vicksburg-Jackson railroad in the vicinity of Edwards. Grant timed the advance so that all three corps reached Fourteen Mile Creek, a natural defensive line for the enemy, on 12 May.

Pemberton's response to Grant's pause and march inland was essentially passive. Aside from some minor raids, the Confederates did nothing to interfere with Grant's forces during the pause. Reinforcements that Pemberton had started toward Port Gibson pulled back when Bowen retreated across the Big Black. Believing that Grant was about to drive directly toward Vicksburg, Pemberton set up a defensive line running from Warrenton to the Big Black River railroad bridge near Edwards. As Grant's army moved steadily inland along the Big Black, Pemberton correctly deduced that Grant's objective was the railroad, specifically, the Edwards bridge. On 11 May, he shifted Loring's and Stevenson's divisions from the defenses near Warrenton to a position nearer Bowen's division at Edwards. Two other divisions remained close to the Vicksburg fortifications. Pemberton himself finally joined his army in the field on 12 May, moving his headquarters from Vicksburg to Bovina. However, he rejected all suggestions that the Confederates attempt to seize the initiative.

*Vignette 1 (Grant decides not to send aid to Banks):* "It was my intention, on gaining a foothold at Grand Gulf, to have sent a sufficient force to Port Hudson to have insured the fall of that place with your cooperation, or rather to have co-operated with you to secure that end.

"Meeting the enemy, however, as I did, south of Port Gibson, I followed him to the Big Black, and could not afford to retrace my steps  
...

"Many days cannot elapse before the battle will begin which is to decide the fate of Vicksburg, but it is impossible to predict how long it may last. I would urgently request, therefore, that you join me or send all the force you can spare to co-operate in the great struggle for opening the Mississippi River." (Grant to Banks, 10 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 288-89.)

*Vignette 2 (One of Pemberton's division commanders proposes that the Confederates seize the initiative):* "The enemy are reported

fortifying positions along the road leading to the railroad and toward Jackson. They will not attempt to pass the Big Black or move upon the railroad until this is done. Is it not, then, our policy to take the offensive before they can make themselves secure and move either way as it may suit them? . . . I believe if a well-concerted plan be adopted, we can drive the enemy into the Mississippi, if it is done in time. They don't expect anything of the kind; they think we are on the defensive." (Loring to Assistant Adjutant General, 9 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 849.)

*Teaching Points:* Turning tactical success into operational advantage, operational pause, operational decision making.

*Situation 2: Union Logistics.* In his memoirs, Grant wrote that his army cut itself off from the base at Grand Gulf and marched into Mississippi without maintaining a line of communications. It is true that the Union soldiers relied heavily on local food and forage during their march inland and that Grant made no attempt to garrison the roads reaching back to Grand Gulf as his army advanced. However, Grant continued to receive supplies from the rear throughout the campaign of maneuver. His line of communications ran by boat from Memphis to Milliken's Bend, then overland to Perkins' Plantation (later, Bower's Landing), by boat again to Grand Gulf, then by heavily-escorted wagon train to the troops. Two divisions, one from McPherson (Brigadier General John McArthur) and one from Sherman (Blair), remained temporarily west of the river to guard the line of communications and provide escorts for the wagon trains.

*Vignette (Grant's logistics plan):* "I do not calculate upon the possibility of supplying the army with full rations from Grand Gulf. I know it will be impossible without constructing additional roads. What I do expect, however, is to get up what rations of hard bread, coffee, and salt we can, and make the country furnish the balance. We started from Bruinsburg with an average of about two days' rations, and received no more from our own supplies for some days. Abundance was found in the mean time. Some corn meal, bacon, and vegetables were found, and an abundance of beef and mutton.

"A delay would give the enemy time to re-enforce and fortify. If Blair were up now, I believe we could be in Vicksburg in seven days." (Grant to Sherman, 9 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 285-86.)

*Teaching Points:* Austere logistics plan.

## **Stand 12**

### **Raymond**

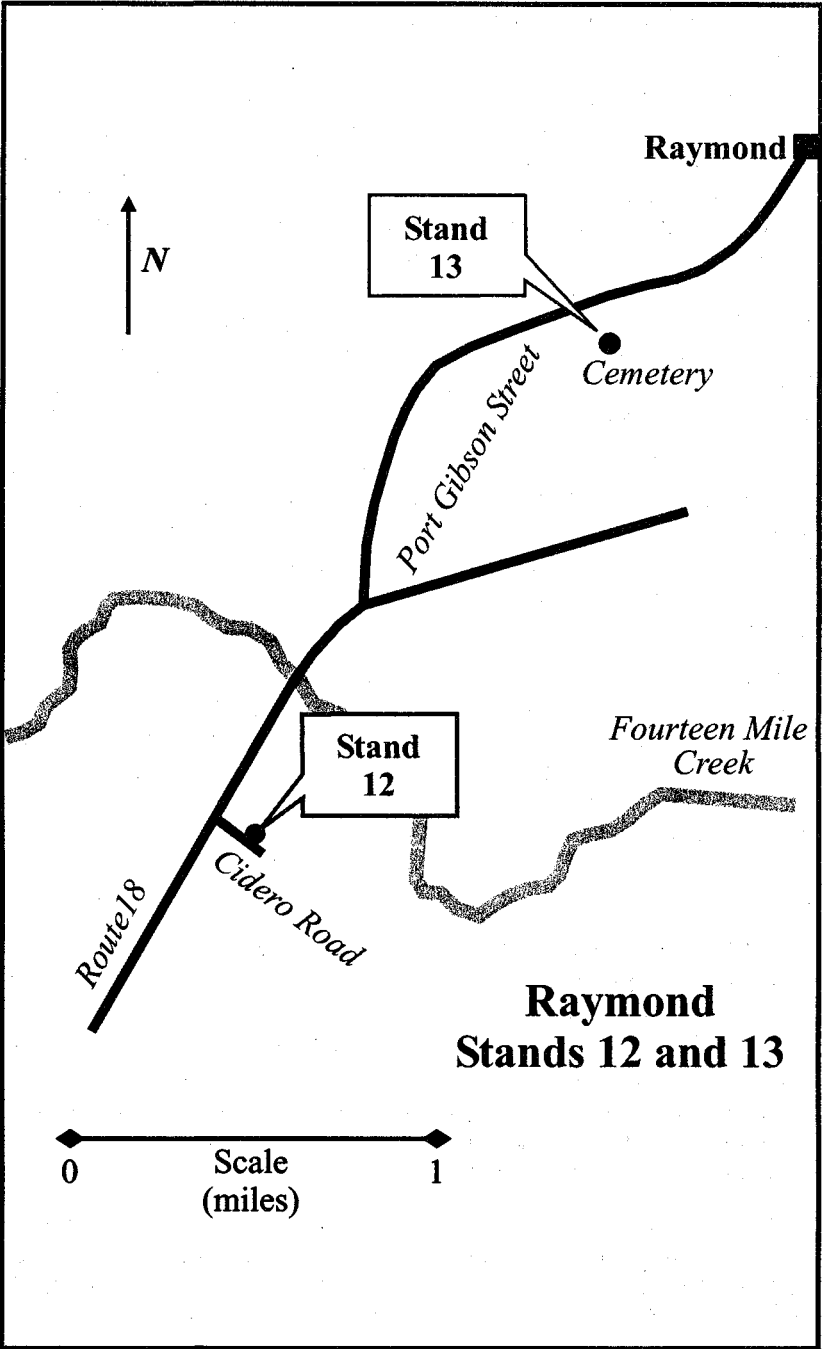
*Directions:* Continue north on State Route 462 for 12.5 miles. Turn right at the four-way stop onto Fisher Ferry Road. After approximately ten miles, this road becomes Main Street in Utica. Turn right where the road ends on the far side of town, then left onto State Route 18 toward Jackson. After thirteen miles turn right onto Cidero Road. Stop where there is a good view to the north: (see map 13 on page 132).

*Orientation:* Fourteen Mile Creek is in the tree line approximately one-half mile to the north. Gregg's Confederate brigade formed on the ridges behind Fourteen Mile Creek. McPherson's corps approached from Utica on what is now State Route 18. The Confederate artillery position was near the site of the Raymond water tower, visible in the distance. Union artillery deployed along the slope behind (south of) this stand.

*Situation:* Confederate reinforcements had begun flowing toward Vicksburg ever since Grant crossed the Mississippi River. Jackson, Mississippi, was the point of convergence as forces arrived from other parts of Pemberton's department and from other departments within the Confederacy.

One of the first reinforcements to reach Jackson was Brigadier General John Gregg's brigade, which came from Port Hudson. On 10 May, Pemberton ordered Gregg to advance from Jackson to Raymond, which placed Gregg in the path of McPherson's two-division corps. Pemberton intended for Gregg to attack the Union right rear, but not until Grant swung his army west toward Vicksburg. Gregg, however, decided to pick a fight with the Union force bearing down on him from Utica, believing it to be no larger than his own. Gregg's 3,000-man brigade proceeded to lay a trap for McPherson's 11,000-man corps. For the battleground, Gregg selected Fourteen Mile Creek, just south of Raymond.

May 12 dawned hot, dry, and still. McPherson's corps, advancing along the Utica-Jackson road, had been skirmishing with Confederate cavalry since the predawn hours when the march began. The Union column was an attenuated one, due to the dusty conditions, and this caused units to allow unusually long intervals. In the morning light, McPherson's cavalry patrols discovered Confederate infantry skirmishers along Fourteen Mile Creek and spotted Gregg's line of battle on the slopes beyond. At 1000, McPherson began to commit the



Map 13

regiments of Logan's division to the task of forcing a crossing of the creek.

Gregg, still unaware of the Union strength, attempted an envelopment of the oncoming Union force. Two regiments, the 7th Texas and the 3d Tennessee, attacked Brigadier General John E. Smith's brigade of Logan's division in the creek bottom, while three other regiments marched off to the east to strike the Union right flank. The Confederate flanking force, its vision unobscured by the smoke and dust rising from the battle in the creek bottom, discovered that the Federals were already present in division strength, with more regiments arriving on the Utica road. Union artillery, deploying on the forward slope, already outnumbered Gregg's three guns. Eventually twenty-two Union guns would be in action. The Confederate flanking force wisely declined to press its attack.

Meanwhile, McPherson fed regiments into the battle as they arrived, thus making his effort piecemeal. Neither he nor Gregg exercised effective control, due perhaps to the choking dust and the jungle-like vegetation in the creek bottom. Regiments fought their own battles.

Eventually, McPherson's disorganized forces pushed across the creek and began driving the Confederates up the slopes toward Raymond. At about 1600, Gregg succeeded in disengaging his badly outnumbered brigade and making good his escape toward Jackson. Casualties in the hard-fought battle totaled 73 killed, 252 wounded, and 190 missing for the Confederates. Union losses, almost all incurred by Logan's division, came to 66 killed, 339 wounded, and 37 missing.

*Vignette 1 (Grant's instructions to McPherson):* "Move your command to-night to the next cross-roads if there is water, and to-morrow with all activity into Raymond. At the latter place you will use your utmost exertions to secure all the subsistence stores that may be there, as well as in the vicinity. We must fight the enemy before our rations fail, and we are equally bound to make our rations last as long as possible. Upon one occasion you made two days' rations last seven. We may have to do the same thing again . . .

"One train of wagons is now arriving, and another will come with Blair, but withal there remains the necessity of economy in the use of the rations we have, and activity in getting others from the country." (Grant to McPherson, 11 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 297.)



*Vignette 2 (Pemberton's instructions to Gregg):* "Do not attack the enemy until he is engaged at Edwards or Big Black Bridge. Be ready to fall on his rear or flank at any moment. Do not allow yourself to be flanked or taken in the rear. Be careful that you do not lose your command." (Pemberton to Gregg, 12 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 862.)

*Vignette 3 (the battle along Fourteen Mile Creek, J. E. Smith's Union brigade):* "In compliance with orders, when about 3 miles from Raymond, about 10 a.m. of the 12th, I formed in line on the right of the road . . . The enemy's advance were discovered posted in a ravine, protected by the dense timber and undergrowth, and also by a branch of Fourteen-Mile Creek—at times a considerable stream with steep banks—but now with only about 2 ½ feet of water, and affording an excellent cover for the enemy. With all these advantages of position in his favor, our skirmishers advanced steadily to the attack, the line also advancing . . . The Twenty-Third Indiana, being in advance of the line, were suddenly attacked by an unseen foe.

"Lieutenant-Colonel Davis, finding his command exposed without support, withdrew, and formed on the right of the Twentieth Illinois. The enemy, rushing forward, encountered the Forty-fifth Illinois, thinking they were alone, and attempted to cut them off, but Colonel McCook, of the Thirty-first, had, unperceived by the enemy, moved upon their flank, and opened fire on them with such effect that they were driven from the right, and massed their forces in the center, evidently endeavoring to cut through, but here they were opposed by the Twentieth Illinois . . . on the left of the brigade, and the Twentieth Ohio . . . on the right of the Second, who maintained their positions under a galling fire nearly two hours." (Report of Brig. Gen. John E. Smith, 23 June 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 1, 706-11.)

*Vignette 4 (the battle along Fourteen Mile Creek, Confederate 7th Texas Regiment):* "As my skirmishers neared the wood on the brow of the hill, the enemy commenced firing from their first line of infantry, posted near the base of the hill. I ordered my regiment to advance in double-quick time. The men obeyed with alacrity, and, when in view of the enemy, rushed forward with a shout. So near were the enemy and so impetuous the charge, that my regiment could have blooded a hundred bayonets had the men been supplied with that weapon. As it was, the enemy fled after firing one volley, leaving a number of prisoners, among them Captain Tubbs, Twenty-third Indiana Infantry .

"The enemy made a stand of some ten minutes at the creek, when we took position just beyond the run of the creek, using the bluff as a breastwork. After holding this position an hour and a half (during which time the firing was uninterrupted and terrific), I received word . . . that the enemy were outflanking [us] on the left . . . I held the position on the bluff of the creek until the men had exhausted their own ammunition, and emptied the cartridge-boxes of the dead of the enemy and of our own killed and wounded . . . [T]he Third Tennessee [to our left] having previously withdrawn, the enemy had doubled round my left flank, and were pouring a murderous enfilading fire along my already shattered ranks. I then ordered a retreat." (Report of H. B. Granbury, 7th Texas Regiment, 15 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 1, 747-48.)

*Teaching Points:* Situational awareness, failure to mass.

### **Stand 13 Raymond Cemetery (Battle of Jackson)**

*Directions:* Resume travel north on Route 18. Go 0.7 mile and turn left toward Raymond (Port Gibson Street). Approximately 1.3 miles beyond the turn, on the right-hand side of the road, is Raymond's Civil War cemetery (see map 13 on page 132).

*Orientation:* Jackson is located about fifteen miles northeast of Raymond. Urban development has obliterated most of the landmarks associated with the engagements of 14 May 1863.

*Situation 1: Battle Deaths.* The citizens of Raymond collected the Confederate dead from the battle of 12 May, interred them here, and have tended the graves ever since. Approximately 130 of Gregg's soldiers are buried in this place. To find a Civil War cemetery near the site of a relatively minor battle is unusual. Most Civil War dead were either collected in centralized cemeteries (such as the one at Vicksburg), returned to their families, or lost forever. These headstones serve to remind us that the soldiers who fell in "minor" battles made the same supreme sacrifice as those killed in the Shilohs and Gettysburgs of the Civil War.

*Teaching Points:* Cost of battle.

*Situation 2: The Battle of Jackson.* The bloody little battle at Raymond had a profound impact upon Grant's campaign plan. On the day of the battle, McClernand, commanding the westernmost of the three Union

corps, had pushed his patrols to within a few miles of the Vicksburg-Jackson railroad at Edwards Station. Sherman's corps was nearby in support at Dillon's plantation. When Grant learned of the hard fight at Raymond, he immediately gave orders to orient his army toward the east. He directed McPherson and Sherman to capture the city of Jackson. McClernand moved his corps eastward to protect their rear. Thus, Grant intended to clear the threat on his right flank before he dealt with Pemberton and the railroad bridge at Edwards.

Jackson was not just the capital of Mississippi but also a manufacturing and commercial center of some importance. Most significant to the Vicksburg campaign were the railroads intersecting there. With the Mississippi River under the control of the Union navy, virtually all of the supplies and reinforcements intended for Pemberton's army would have to pass through Jackson by rail. On 12 May, approximately 10,000 Confederate troops were on board trains bound for Jackson. They came from other parts of Mississippi, from Tennessee, and even South Carolina. These reinforcements might have given Pemberton the strength to both garrison Vicksburg and challenge Grant in open battle.

Pemberton, however, would not be involved directly in the defense of Jackson. On 9 May, the Confederate government directed General Joseph E. Johnston, Pemberton's superior, to leave his headquarters in Tullahoma, Tennessee, and take direct command in Mississippi. Johnston arrived in Jackson on 13 May and found the place defended by only 6,000 Confederate troops (including Gregg's bloodied brigade), some state troops, and an assortment of civilian volunteers. A hastily constructed line of trenches, forming a semicircle on the western outskirts of the city, was the only prepared defensive position. Upon surveying the situation, Johnston sent a telegraph message to the Confederate government, saying, "I am too late." He promptly ordered the evacuation of the city, even though Grant's army had not yet arrived. Gregg's brigade (reinforced) would conduct a delaying action while military supplies were evacuated. Additionally, Johnston ordered Pemberton to advance from Edwards and attack the Union rear at Clinton, west of Jackson, while the Jackson garrison retreated northward.

Pemberton, however, stayed in his defensive positions near Edwards. Grant proceeded to turn his back on Pemberton and concentrate the Union army against Jackson. On 13 May, McPherson's corps marched north from Raymond to Clinton, where his engineers

cut the Vicksburg-Jackson railroad. Meanwhile, Sherman's corps marched from Dillon's plantation through Raymond (crossing behind McPherson's corps) to Mississippi Springs, which positioned it southwest of Jackson. McClernand's corps feinted toward Edwards to hold Pemberton there, then moved east to Raymond.

On 14 May, in the midst of a driving rainstorm, McPherson and Sherman launched a converging attack on Jackson, with McClernand guarding their rear. McPherson's corps, Crocker's division in the lead, advanced on Jackson from the west. Crocker came under artillery fire while still well forward of the Jackson fortifications, whereupon McPherson called a halt to organize a deliberate attack. The Confederate force confronting him, however, was only a rearguard consisting of some 900 men. When it came, McPherson's assault drove the Confederates back upon their trenches. McPherson paused again. When the Union advance resumed, the Confederates were gone.

In the meantime, Sherman's corps advanced from the southwest with Brigadier General James M. Tuttle's division leading. Tuttle encountered a hastily assembled Confederate force that he overwhelmed with artillery and then pushed back to the Jackson trench line. Confederate artillery fire held Tuttle at bay until a Union patrol discovered that the trenches on the Union right were unoccupied. Tuttle quickly swept up the guns confronting him, which were manned by only a handful of Confederate volunteers. Sherman's corps then advanced into Jackson and linked up with McPherson. While McPherson's quartermasters foraged for much-needed supplies, Sherman commenced the destruction of manufacturing and railroad facilities. It would take weeks for the Confederates to reopen the rail lines into Jackson.

Union losses in the Jackson engagements totaled 42 killed, 251 wounded, and seven missing. Confederate losses are not known. However, the low casualty count belies the significance of this affair. In fact, the capture of Jackson held enormous implications for Grant's campaign against Vicksburg because it temporarily reversed the convergence of Confederate reinforcements toward Pemberton. Johnston, along with the Jackson garrison, retreated north to Canton. Those forces that were converging on Jackson stopped where they were when they learned of the city's fall. Had Johnston retained Jackson, he would have had 13,000 troops poised on Grant's flank within a day or two. But with Jackson temporarily neutralized as a

transportation center, Grant was free to turn his full attention upon Pemberton.

*Vignette 1 (Sherman's account of the destruction in Jackson):* "... on the morning of May 15, Steele's division was set to work to destroy the railroad and property to the south and east, including the Pearl River Bridge, and Tuttle's division that to the north and west. This work of destruction was well accomplished, and Jackson, as a railroad center or Government depot of stores and military factories, can be of little use to the enemy for six months.

"The railroads were destroyed by burning the ties and warping the iron. I estimate the destruction of the roads 4 miles east of Jackson, 3 south, 3 north, and 10 west.

"In Jackson the arsenal buildings, the Government foundry, the gun-carriage establishment, including the carriages for two complete six-gun batteries, stable, carpenter and paint shops were destroyed. The penitentiary was burned, I think, by some convicts who had been set free by the Confederate authorities; also a very valuable cotton factory." (Report of Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman, 24 May 1863, In *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 1, 751-58.)

*Vignette 2 (Grant's orders to McClernand after the capture of Jackson):* "Our troops carried this place about 3 o'clock this p.m., after a brisk fight of about three hours. The enemy retreated north toward Canton; Johnston was in command. It is evidently the design of the enemy to get north of us, and cross the Black River and beat us into Vicksburg. We must not allow them to do this. Turn all your forces toward Bolton Station, and make all dispatch in getting there . . .

"Sherman and McPherson will immediately retrace their steps, only detaining a force to destroy the railroads north and east." (Grant to McClernand, 14 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 310.)

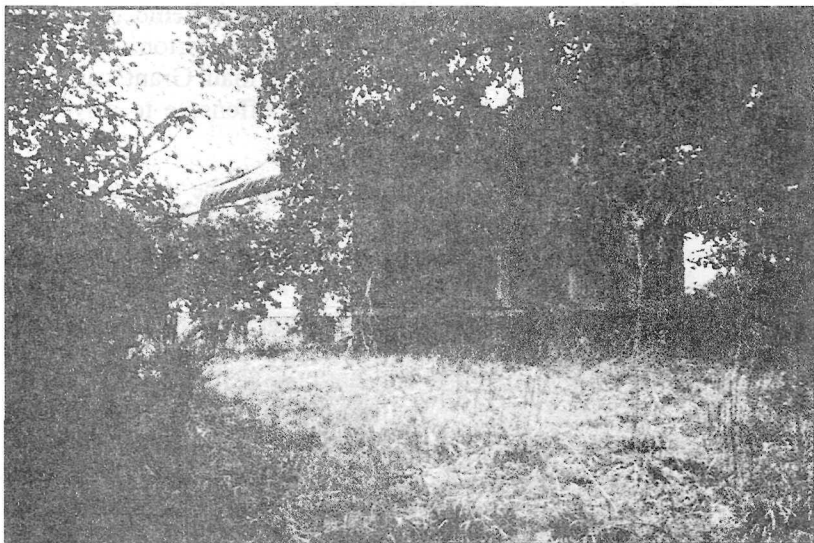
*Teaching Points:* Impact of tactical engagement upon campaign plan, initiative, delaying action.

## DAY 3

### Stand 14

#### Coker House

*Directions:* The Coker House is approximately 3.5 miles east of Edwards on State Route 467. To pick up the campaign where Day 2 of



The Coker House (1997)

the staff ride ended, start from the square in the middle of Raymond. Take Main Street west, which becomes State Route 467. Proceed west for 9.1 miles. Just beyond Military Road, on the south side of the highway, is the Coker House. Turn left at the large Cal-Maine Foods sign (see map 14 on page 143).

*Orientation:* The Coker House is the only building on the Champion Hill battlefield that dates from the Civil War. It is located on the southern edge of the battle area. The Raymond Road (State Route 467) is the southernmost of the three routes by which Grant's army converged on Pemberton. In Civil War times, there was a farm path (the Ratliff Road) that ran north from this vicinity to the crossroads just south of Champion Hill where the Jackson Road and the Middle Road met. The Ellison House site is approximately 1.5 miles east of the Coker House.

*Situation 1: Confederate Movements.* Grant's capture of Jackson on 14 May cut off Pemberton from any hope of speedy reinforcement. He would be compelled to defend Vicksburg with the forces already at hand: three divisions (23,000) at Edwards and two divisions (13,000) near Vicksburg. If combined, these forces would number about the same as the Union army in and around Jackson. But Pemberton steadfastly refused to bring out the garrison of Vicksburg, even temporarily. President Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy had

instructed Pemberton to defend Vicksburg, and Pemberton was inclined to interpret that guidance quite literally. Pemberton's plan was to stay in his defensive position on the Big Black, maul Grant's army in a defensive battle, and only then to take the offensive to drive the Federals from Mississippi.

On 14 May, however, Pemberton received the message that Johnston had sent from Jackson the day before instructing Pemberton to march east and attack the Union forces at Clinton. Unhappy at the prospect of moving his field army farther away from Vicksburg, Pemberton convened a council of war (composed of all general officers present) to help him out of his dilemma. Loring proposed that the Confederates mount an attack but that they strike Grant's line of communications rather than the Union field forces. Pemberton reluctantly agreed with Loring and gave orders for an attack the next day against the Union supply depot at Dillon's Plantation.

Pemberton's halfhearted offensive of 15 May never got off the ground. Owing to bad staff work, the march from Edwards to Dillon did not even begin until 1300. Then, it was discovered that the bridge over Baker's Creek on the Raymond Road had washed out, necessitating a lengthy detour over Champion Hill. Pemberton was still well short of Dillon when darkness fell. Loring's division, in the lead, camped near the Ellison house on the Raymond Road. Behind Loring were Bowen's and Stevenson's divisions, which pitched camp along the Ratliff Road. Pemberton established his headquarters at the Ellison House.

At 0800 on the morning of 16 May, Pemberton received a message from Johnston, dated 15 May, informing him that Jackson was in Union hands and ordering Pemberton to unite his army with Johnston's force north of Jackson. This time, Pemberton obeyed, even though his reconnaissance elements reported sizable Union forces nearby. (A serious shortage of cavalry in the Confederate force prevented Pemberton from learning any details about Union dispositions.) He issued orders for his army to reverse course and return to Edwards, from where it would march east and north to join Johnston. The sudden onset of battle prevented these orders from being carried out.

As if he did not have problems enough, Pemberton carried an additional handicap into the forthcoming battle. He was losing the confidence of his army. His apparent reluctance to give battle, coupled with his Northern birth and abrasive command style, evoked dislike

and distrust among officers and men alike. Foremost among Pemberton's detractors was William W. Loring.

*Teaching Points:* Command climate, fog and friction of war.

*Situation 2: Union Movements.* On 14 May, shortly after occupying Jackson, Grant received an important document from a Union agent who had infiltrated the Confederate command. It was a copy of the 13 May message from Johnston to Pemberton ordering the latter to attack Grant at Clinton. Thus alerted that Pemberton might soon be marching east, Grant resolved to intercept and defeat him before he could unite with Johnston. On 15 May, while Pemberton spent most of the day finding a way across Baker's Creek, Grant skillfully faced his army about to the west. McClernand's corps, which had been the rearguard while Grant captured Jackson, became the advance, with one division on the Jackson Road, two on the Middle Road, and one on the Raymond Road. McPherson marched his two divisions from Jackson to Bolton, where they linked up with McClernand's right-flank division. Sherman remained in Jackson with two divisions to complete his work of destruction, while his third division, just arrived from Grand Gulf, joined McClernand's left flank division on the Raymond Road. McClernand commanded the Middle Road and Raymond Road forces, while McPherson and Grant eventually assumed control over the Jackson Road axis. By nightfall on 15 May, Grant had seven divisions, totaling 32,000 men, poised on the line Raymond-Bolton and facing west.

At 0500 on 16 May, two railroad workers made their way to Grant's headquarters with the information that Pemberton had indeed marched east from Edwards. Grant promptly ordered Sherman to finish his business in Jackson and come west to join the main force. He then directed McClernand and McPherson to advance cautiously and locate the enemy.

First contact occurred on the Raymond Road about 0700, when Union cavalry ran up against a Confederate roadblock. Soon after, A. J. Smith's division of McClernand's corps encountered Loring's division drawn up for battle in the vicinity of the Coker House. Confederate and Union artillery dueled vigorously, but there was no assault. The battle of Champion Hill had begun.

*Vignette 1 (President Davis reminds Pemberton of the importance of holding Vicksburg):* "To hold both Vicksburg and Port Hudson is necessary to a connection with Trans-Mississippi. You may expect



whatever is in my power to do.” (Davis to Pemberton, 7 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 842.)

*Vignette 2 (Johnston's 13 May message urges Pemberton to mass forces against Grant's army):* “It is important to re-establish communications, that you may be reinforced. If practicable, come up on [the enemy] rear [at Clinton] at once . . . All the strength you can quickly assemble should be brought.” (Johnston to Pemberton, 13 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 870.)

*Vignette 3 (Johnston's 15 May message disapproves Pemberton's expedition to Dillon's):* “Our being compelled to leave Jackson makes your plan impracticable. The only mode by which we can unite is by your moving directly to Clinton . . .” (Johnston to Pemberton, 15 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 882.)

*Vignette 4 (McClernand's orders to his corps for 16 May):* “The movement will be toward Edwards Station, with the purpose to feel the enemy and to engage him if it be found expedient to do so. Let each division keep up communication with that or those next to it, and all move on parallel with each other as near as may be.” (McClernand to Carr, Smith, Hovey, and Osterhaus, 15 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 314.)

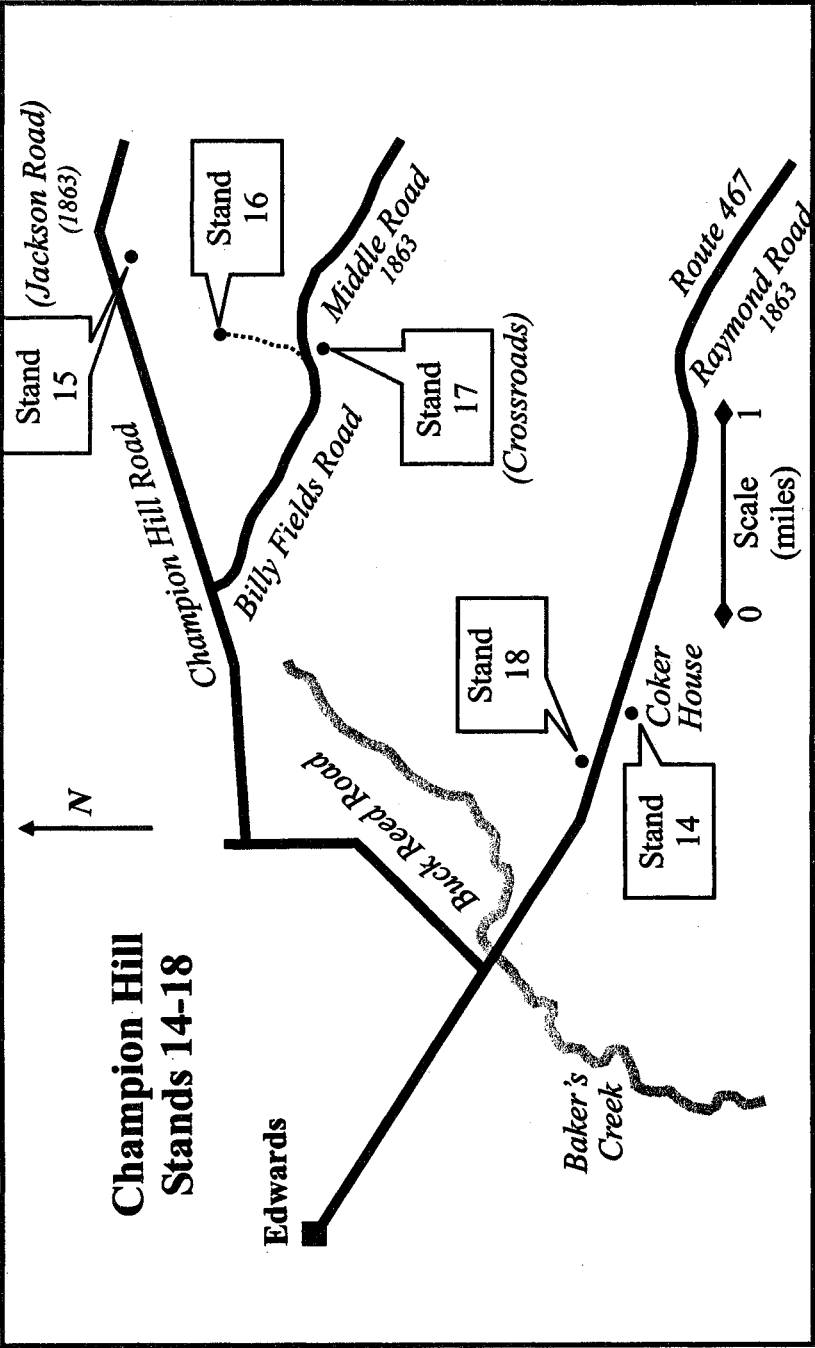
*Vignette 5 (At 0530 on 16 May, Grant calls up part of Sherman's force in Jackson):* “Start one of your divisions on the road at once, with their ammunition wagons, and direct the general commanding the division to move with all possible speed until he comes up with our rear beyond Bolton. It is important that the greatest celerity should be shown in carrying out this movement, as I have evidence that the entire force of the enemy was at Edwards Depot at 7 p.m. last night, and was still advancing. The fight may, therefore, be brought on at any moment. We should have every man in the field.” (Grant to Sherman, 16 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 3, 319.)

*Teaching Points:* Operational decision making, tempo of operations, flexibility.

## **Stand 15**

### **Champion House**

*Directions:* Proceed west on Route 467 for 1.4 miles, crossing Baker's Creek. Turn right on Buck Reed Road. Go 1.5 miles, then turn right on



Map 14

Champion Hill Road. After 3.1 miles stop at the driveway of the Champion Hill MBC Church (see map 14 on page 143).

*Orientation:* The Champion Hill MBC Church occupies the approximate site of the Champion House, which served as Grant's headquarters during the battle. In 1863, the road from Jackson came in from the east, turned south here, and climbed Champion Hill, which is the high ground to the south. Beyond the crest of Champion Hill is the crossroads where the Jackson Road met the Middle Road and the Ratliff Road. Beyond the crossroads, about four miles south of here, stands the Coker House.

In 1863, much of the land in this vicinity was under cultivation. Fields and woods flanked the Jackson road where it ascended Champion Hill, and the top of the hill was cleared.

(The segment of Champion Hill Road between Billy Fields Road and the Champion Hill MBC did not exist during the Civil War. To get from here to Edwards in 1863, it would have been necessary to climb the hill and turn right at the crossroads.)

*Situation 1: Confederate Dispositions.* Stevenson's division, which at 11,000 strong was by far the largest of Pemberton's divisions, constituted the rear of the 15 May advance from Edwards toward Dillon's. Stevenson's men spent the night of 15-16 May in the vicinity of the crossroads on the south flank of Champion Hill. When Pemberton gave orders the next morning to countermarch to Edwards, Stevenson became the lead division. The nearest Union forces were thought to be those menacing the Coker House and the Ratliff Road, where Loring and Bowen stood prepared to shield the Confederate withdrawal.

At about 0900, while Stevenson's division was preoccupied with the task of turning around for the return to Edwards, a patrol from one of its brigades pushed north to the crest of Champion Hill. From there, the startled Confederates could see swarms of Union troops deploying into line of battle near the Champion House. Stevenson quickly began pulling regiments from his right and feeding them into a defensive line facing north, protecting the crossroads that constituted the only Confederate line of retreat. Stevenson's new line stood at right angles to the line occupied by Bowen and Loring along the Ratliff Road. Thus, the Confederate battle line assumed the shape of a large "V." The apex of the "V" rested on the crest of Champion Hill.

*Vignette (Lee's Brigade, Stevenson's division, establishes a new defensive line facing north):* "At about 9 o'clock it was discovered that the enemy was massing troops on the left, evidently for the purpose of turning our left flank and getting between our army and Edwards Depot. My brigade was at once marched (under fire) by the left flank for the purpose of checking the enemy . . .

"As early as 10 o'clock in the morning it became evident that the enemy was in heavy force and determined on battle, as his skirmishers were bold and aggressive, and several divisions of his troops were visible in front of our left." (Report of Brig. Gen. S. D. Lee, 25 July 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 2, 101-3.)

*Teaching Points:* Failure of reconnaissance, hasty defensive line.

*Situation 2: Union Dispositions.* By midmorning, Grant's three columns were ideally situated to deliver a concentric attack upon the Confederates. McClelland's command, two divisions each on the Raymond and Middle Roads, had made contact with the enemy and compelled him to form for battle. On the Jackson Road, McPherson (accompanied by Grant in person) deployed two divisions for an assault up Champion Hill. Hovey's division (which belonged to McClelland's corps but fought with McPherson on this day) formed up on the left side of the road near the Champion House. Logan's division lined up on Hovey's right. McPherson's other division (Crocker) was still coming forward from Bolton.

At about 0945, McClelland, who was with Osterhaus' division on the Middle Road, dispatched a message to Grant inquiring if it was time to bring on a general engagement. Apparently, McClelland's courier traveled by the roads instead of across country, thus turning a three-mile trip into a twelve-mile journey each way. (Grant later dispatched a courier of his own, who made the trip in thirty minutes.) More than four hours would elapse before McClelland received the order to attack.

*Vignette (Hovey's deployment near the Champion House):* "On arriving near Champion's Hill, about 10 a. m., [we] discovered the enemy posted on the crest of the hill, with a battery of four guns in the woods near the road, and on the highest point for many miles around . . . I immediately rode forward and ordered General McGinnis to form his brigade in two lines, three regiments being in the advance and two in the reserve . . .

"The Second Brigade, Col. James R. Slack commanding, was immediately formed on the left of the First Brigade, two regiments in advance and two in reserve. Skirmishers were at once sent forward, covering my entire front, and had advanced to within sight of the enemy's battery. They were directed not to bring on the action until we were entirely ready . . . In the mean time Major-General Grant had arrived, and with him Major-General McPherson, with his command." (Report of Brig. Gen. Alvin P. Hovey, 25 May 1863, in *O.R.*, vol. 24, pt. 2, 40-46.)

*Teaching Points:* Meeting engagement, battlefield communication, synchronization.

### **Stand 16 Champion Hill**

*Directions:* Backtrack 1.7 miles on Champion Hill Road, and turn left on Billy Fields Road. After traveling 1.3 miles, pull off at the intersection with D. J. Johnson Road. Opposite from Johnson Road is a path leading north. Walk this path to the top of the hill (see map 14). (The path lies on private property. If you have not coordinated trespass permission through Vicksburg National Military Park headquarters, conduct stand 16 at the intersection of Billy Fields Road and D. J. Johnson Road.)

*Orientation:* In 1863, the intersection of Billy Fields Road and Johnson Road was the all-important crossroads. The Middle Road (Billy Fields Road) came in from the east to join the Jackson Road (the trail you are on) as it descended Champion Hill and turned west toward Edwards. Johnson Road represents the Ratliff Road but no longer goes through to the Coker House. From the top of the hill, the Champion House is approximately one mile down the slope to your north.

Part of Champion Hill has been quarried out for gravel since 1863. Lumbering activities have further reconfigured the landscape, which was more open and trafficable than it is today.

*Situation 1 (McPherson's attack):* The Union advance up Champion Hill began at about 1030. An hour later, Hovey and Logan had pushed in the Confederate pickets and were poised to assault Stevenson's main line. McPherson ordered the assault at 1130. Hovey's division, on the left of the assault, struck the apex of the Confederate salient and broke it. Union troops faced right and left, enfilading nearby Confederate brigades.

Logan's division on the right of the assault encountered more difficult terrain and more effective Confederate fire. Seeking a weak spot in the Confederate line, Logan sent a brigade around his right flank and found that the Confederate left was open. This brigade pressed forward and eventually reached the Jackson Road, effectively severing the Confederate escape route.

Carter Stevenson, confronted with the specter of double envelopment, had no option but to withdraw his division and form a new line. After falling back some 400 yards, he established his right flank at the crossroads and ran his new battle line westward along the Jackson Road. The Union divisions followed up and maintained their pressure. Soon, the crossroads was in the hands of Hovey's Union troops.

*Vignette (McGinnis' brigade, Hovey's division, in the assault on Champion Hill):* "The whole line moved forward, with bayonets fixed, slowly, cautiously, and in excellent order, and when within about 75 yards of the [Confederate] battery every gun was opened upon us and every man went to the ground. As soon as the volley of grape and canister had passed over us, the order was given to charge, when the whole line moved forward as one man, and so suddenly and apparently so unexpected to the rebels was the movement, that, after a desperate conflict of five minutes, in which bayonets and butts of muskets were freely used, the battery of four guns was in our possession, and a whole brigade in support was fleeing before us, and a large number of them taken prisoners . . . The rebels were driven about 600 yards . . ." (Report of Brig. Gen. George F. McGinnis, 19 May 1863, in *O.R.*, Vol. 24, pt. 2, 48-52.)

*Teaching points:* Assault tactics, key terrain, face of battle.

*Situation 2 (Bowen's counterattack):* By the time Hovey's men fought their way to the crossroads, it was about 1400, and Stevenson's division had borne the brunt of the battle unassisted for four hours. Curiously, Pemberton seems to have been more worried about a potential battle on his quiet right flank than he was about the real crisis on his left. Finally, he peremptorily ordered Bowen to pull his division out of the Ratliff Road line and to go help Stevenson. Bowen was reluctant to abandon his position in the face of McClelland's four divisions, but he obeyed. Loring's division shifted left to cover Bowen's sector. At 1430, Bowen launched a counterattack that routed Hovey's tired troops, drove them back from the crossroads, over the

crest of Champion Hill, and back to the vicinity of the Champion House—some three-quarters of a mile in all.

The crisis was now on the Union side, as Bowen threatened to rupture the Union front and break into the Union wagon train. Grant himself got involved in rallying Hovey's shaken troops to stem the Confederate advance, but other help was at hand. Sixteen Union artillery pieces enfiladed Bowen's right-hand brigade and halted it. Moreover, Crocker's division had arrived and was able to deploy in time to arrest the last of Bowen's momentum. Soon Crocker was advancing steadily back up Champion Hill, driving Bowen's tired soldiers before him. The crest of Champion Hill came under Union control yet again.

(In his memoirs, Grant stated that Bowen's counterattack caused him to pull back the brigade of Logan's division that had cut the Jackson Road on the Confederate left, inadvertently opening the route by which Pemberton's army eventually escaped. In reality, Logan returned the brigade to its position once Bowen had been repulsed. Moreover, as we shall see, most of Pemberton's army withdrew by another route altogether when the Confederate retreat took place that evening.)

*Vignette (Cockrell's brigade, in Bowen's counterattack):* "...I ordered the brigade to charge the heavy, strong lines of the enemy, rapidly advancing and cheering, flushed with their success and the capture of our guns; and in the most gallant, dashing, fearless manner, officers and men with loud cheers threw themselves forward at a run against the enemy's hitherto victorious lines . . . Soon the enemy's lines in front of this brigade were checked, and after a very stubborn resistance and a very destructive fire from my whole line, firing continuously in its rapid advance, they were severely repulsed and driven back . . .

"Fresh troops of the enemy were rapidly thrown in front of our lines, and were immediately engaged and repulsed. This fearful strife was kept up uninterruptedly for two and a half hours. The soldiers of this brigade fired away the 40 rounds of ammunition in their cartridge-boxes, and instead of abandoning the field took from the cartridge-boxes of their fallen and wounded soldiers, and even stripped the slain and wounded of the enemy, with whom the ground was thickly strewn, of all their cartridges, many of them firing 75 to 90 rounds . . . When all the ammunition in cartridge-boxes and that